

# Cross Country Guidelines for Michigan Junior High/Middle School Teams

## **Rules**

- Junior high/Middle School Cross Country course distances should all be 3200m or 2 mi
- Competition is limited to ten meets per season, with a maximum of two meets per week
- Students may not compete in two meets on the same day
- Rules of Junior High/Middle School Cross Country are printed in the National Federation Track & Field Rule Book with MHSAA modifications included in Regulation IV, Section 7 of the MHSAA Handbook
- Cross Country distances may be shortened by mutual consent of the competing schools prior to the date of the meet
- 6<sup>th</sup> graders and below may not compete against 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> graders, there is no limitation on distance, except that they may not exceed 3200m (MHSAA Rules)
- 3/8" spikes allowed only
  - Odd Years (2005): Girls run first
  - Even Years (2006): Boys run first
  - No jewelry or watches for boys or girls. No exceptions
- All runners from one team must have the same solid color clothing to wear under jerseys if layering clothing
- All team members must have matching uniform color

## Hosting a Meet

### **Course Provisions**

- Paint a line down the center of the entire course to guide runners as they traverse the trails
- Additionally, decision points along the course should be indicated by colored flags per the standard:
  - RED – left turn
  - WHITE/YELLOW – right turn
  - BLUE – straight ahead
- Rope off areas that runners are not permitted to run on

## **Workers Needed**

- Starter (school usually provides)
- One person to start the running clock
- People to filter the finishers through the shoot to the finish area
- Timers should start their watches with the starter's gun smoke (not sound)
- Assign one head timer and keep track of finishers as they come across the finish line. This could be with a clock with printer or a sheet that contains second by second times and tallies are made next to the time when a runner crosses the finish line
- Meet Tabulator/Scorer for boys and one for girls
- Optional worker for concessions and another for admissions
- Post a person at each place on the course where there is a decision to be made in direction and runners could possibly get lost
- Medical support or trainer for falls or injuries
- Course clearer- this person rides in a golf cart, on a bike, or starts out ahead of the pack and ensures that all spectators are off the course and guides the front runner
- Participant Check-in- this person runs or ride a bike behind the last athlete to ensure that all athletes are safe and finished before beginning another race

## **Materials Needed**

- Copies of course map to distribute to parents, athletes, and coaches
- Times of all finishing runners printed out for scoring purposes and coach referencing
- Watches for timers
- Hand held timer to print out all times
- Running clock
- Cones
- Spray paint to paint boxes at the start
- Place cards/sticks
- Strings of colored flags with stakes to create finish shoot
- Two poster boards: 1 for girls labels to be stuck to and 1 for boys labels to be stuck to for scoring, then times will be placed next to the runners labels for coaches to record times for their reference throughout the season
- Place cards with numbers for order finish, to help keep finishes in order as they filter to the timing table ( the amount of number will depend on the number of participants, for example 1-100)

### **Meet Formats**

- 2 races: 1 boys and 1 girls
- 3 Speed Races: 1-3 (top 3 boys and girls), 4-6 (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> best boys and girls, 7+ (all other team members)
- 5 Races: 7th boys, 7th girls, 8th boys, 8<sup>th</sup> girls, 6th boys and girls
- 2 races: 7<sup>th</sup> graders and 8<sup>th</sup> graders

### **Warm-Up**

- Runners should be completely warmed up before running their races to avoid injury
- Coaches need to be provided with course maps to help guide their team through course prior to the race

### **Starts**

- One false start is permitted
- All teams are assigned a box
- Boxes should have runners lined up from front to back, starting with the fastest runners closest to the starting line
- No jewelry is permitted
- All runners will wear matching uniforms, including the same color under armor

### **Award Possibilities**

- Medals to all finishers
- Medals to top 20 runners each race
- Team Scores: Plaques awarded to top teams for boys and girls
- Medals to top 5 per race
- Medals to top 10 per race
- Ribbons to all participants
- League Meet Awards: Medals to top 50 per race, participation ribbons for 6<sup>th</sup> graders + Trophies to Top 2 teams per race + Plaques to 3-5 teams per race + 1 girls race and 1 boys race

### **Meet Scoring**

- Runners wear stickers that contain the following information:  
first and last name, school, and grade.  
When participants cross the finish line, they are funneled through a chute, handed a place card and directed to a table where volunteers take the sticker and put it on a poster board, in the order of finish (boys and girls should not be mixed). From the head timer, times are written down in order next to the stickers

- Athletes place cards to their coach who records the place number of their top five runners and total the points. This point total is reported to the hosting team. For example, Team has 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> place finish. They add 1 + 3 + 6 + 8 + 10. This equals 28 points for this team. The team with the lowest total wins.

### **Strategies for Recruiting**

- Encourage current athletes and offer incentives to invite friends to participate
- Offer pre-season runs and activities to promote interest in cross country
- Visit middle schools/junior highs and advertise with video highlights of previous seasons
- Hold Running/Track Clubs at the elementary schools to promote interest in running

### **SUGGESTIONS and/or ADDITIONS:**

In order to make this document most beneficial for all of us, please e-mail suggestions to [tlober@egrps.org](mailto:tlober@egrps.org)

## **ATTENTION** **VARSITY CROSS COUNTRY AND** **TRACK & FIELD COACHES**

Please distribute copies of these Guidelines to all coaches in your middle schools or junior high schools

### **MITCA CROSS COUNTRY CLINIC**

**November 9-11<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**Crowne Plaza  
Grand Rapids, MI**

### **MITCA TRACK & FIELD CLINIC**

**February 8-10<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Holiday Inn South  
Lansing, MI**

To register for clinics and get valuable information regarding XC and T&F, visit [www.mitca.org](http://www.mitca.org)

This information was compiled with the help of the MITCA Middle School Committee: Teya Lober (Co-Chair), Jim Katakowski (Co-Chair), Jamie Rykse, Tom McHugh